DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 448 086 SO 032 323

AUTHOR	Lewis, Karla
TITLE	Influences on Garifuna Youth's Education.
PUB DATE	1999-04-00
NOTE	24p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Montreal, Quebec, Canada, April 19-23, 1999).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Cultural Context; *Developing Nations; *Educational Experience; Educational Research; Ethnography; Foreign Countries; Popular Culture; *Youth
IDENTIFIERS	Belize; *Carib; Caribbean; Constant Comparative Method; Historical Background; Research Suggestions

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the influences on Garifuna (also known as Caribs) youth education through the voices of Garifuna educators and youths. The paper emphasizes, in both its content and methodology, that discussion of education in the Caribbean and specifically Belize cannot be separated from the educators' experiences and the adolescents' aspirations. The paper examines the cultural and political influences on the youth of the Garifuna culture; however, the cultural influence is not only of the Garifuna but also of U.S. popular culture. Data for the paper were collected through observations, face-to-face interviews, and secondary analysis; the constant comparative method was used to analyze the data. The paper's findings suggest that there have been changes in the educational focus of the Garifuna youth of Dangriga and that these youths' attitudes pervade the whole country. Participants in the research saw the decline of interest in school as caused by: (1) emigration of parents to the United States; (2) influences from U.S. culture; and (3) lack of employment opportunities. The paper calls for further research into the Garifuna language, the religious beliefs, and the kinship relationships, as well as the education of the Garifuna. Contains 3 notes and 30 references. (BT)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 448 086

Influences on Garifuna Youth's Education

SO 032 323

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Karla C. Lewis

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Karla Lewis
University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign
Educational Policy Studies
AERA 1999 Presentation
Montreal, Canada

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Introduction

It was a warm Spring afternoon in downtown Augusta, Georgia. I was visiting my aunt and her family for Spring Break. We got into a discussion about our trip the previous summer to Belize and our stay in Dangriga (Stann Creek) were my mother grew up. My uncle was discussing the slowness of the atmosphere, especially among the adolescents. He also noticed that although school was in session during our visit, no one was in school. My cousin at 13 years of age responded, "They are lazy." My heart started to flutter, my eyes took her in and I replied, "There are no jobs." We then got into the discussion that school was not really that important to the youths, because there was nothing to do in Dangriga or Belize with the education received.

This paper examines the influences on Garifuna (Note 1) youth's (Note 2) education through the voices of Garifuna educators and youths. By youth's I mean anyone from adolescence to young adulthood. By doing so, this paper emphasizes, both in its content and methodology, that discussion of education in the Caribbean and specifically Belize, cannot be separated from educators experiences and the adolescents aspirations. This paper examines the cultural and political influences on the youth of the Garifuna culture; however, the cultural influence is not only of the Garifuna, but of American popular culture.

Historical Context

Belize's Origins

To understand the Garifuna youths, you must first understand Belize's history and the history of the Garifuna in Belize. Belize is surrounded North by Mexico, West and South by Guatemala, and East by the Caribbean Sea. Belize is the least densely settled of the Central American nations. Officially known as British Honduras until 1973, Belize has historically been regarded as a West Indian nation in a Hispanic region. When

research has been done on Central America, rarely is Belize and its diverse population mentioned. Some have theorized that there is a deep-rooted antagonism between Afro-Caribbean's and Hispanics. (Moberg, 1997) But Belize is also forgotten in discussions of the Caribbean or on West Indian peoples. In the Belize 1990 census, Mestizos (Spanish and Maya descent) were the largest ethnic group. (Government of Belize, 1991) The result of the census does not match the nation's identity, of being predominantly Afro-Caribbean and identity has always been important to Belizeans.

Initially, Belize was a Spanish colonial holding. However, the Spanish could never occupy the interior of the land or assimilate the Maya peoples. British colonists, called the Baymen eventually settled near the mouth of the Belize River in the mid-1600s. (Taylor, 1949) Spain and Britain were rivals at the time and periodically the Spanish would expel the Baymen from Belize. In 1793 under the Treaty of Paris, Spain granted the British the right to cut timber and occupy the territory. The British were also allowed to bring African slaves, but they were not allowed to build permanent settlements, which affected the population until the nineteenth century. (Grant, 1976) In exchange, the settlers would recognize Spanish sovereignty over the region. After two hundred years, in 1862, Belize became the official crown colony of British Honduras.

Garifuna Origins

The Garifuna, also known as Caribs, were first described as the Black Caribs on the island of St. Vincent in the Lesser Antilles (Southern Caribbean). Gonzalez (1998) states that the French, in the early 1700's described two groups occupying the island, the Yellow (or Red) Caribs and the Black Caribs. (p.16) The Garifuna are a mixture of Africans, who had been brought to the Western Hemisphere to be slaves, runaway slaves

from the surrounding area and the Arawak and Carib Indians already living on the island. A shipwreck in 1635 is attributed to the emergence of Africans on St. Vincent. Unlike the Arawak's, the Caribs were originally from South America and moved every few years, using dugout canoes to get from island to island. Sutherland (1998) states, "There is also evidence suggesting that during the seventeenth century, the St. Vincent Caribs raided other islands for both whites and blacks, and brought them to St. Vincent to become slaves of the Caribs" (p.23). However, the culture is based on a fusion of Amerindian and African language, religious and kinship practices.

The Garifuna resisted European control over the island and fought against the French, Spanish and British. Britain eventually prevailed and defeated the Garifuna on June 10, 1796. They were then deported from the island between March and April, 1797 and sent to Roatan, which is north of Honduras. However, the Garifuna left Roatan and settled in Honduras. Later they traveled down the coast to Nicaragua, up the coast to Guatemala and also settled in the Southern sections of Belize, specifically Dangriga (formerly referred to a Stann Creek) and Punta Gorda. In 1802, the British colonial government recorded the presence of 150 Garifuna in Stann Creek. In 1832, after a civil war in Honduras, a large number of Garifuna led by Alejo Beni arrived and settled in Dangriga on November 19, which is celebrated as Garifuna Settlement Day, a national holiday. Although slavery was still in existence in Belize, they were free. The British abolished slavery in 1807, however slaves were not emancipated throughout the British Empire until 1838. (A history of Belize: Nation in the making. (1983), p.38)

Prejudice against the Garifuna

My brother is Creole (Black), Mestizo (Spanish and Mayan Indian ancestry) and East Indian. One day my father, a Creole, took us out to swim. My brother brought along a friend, a Creole. They were making stereotypical remarks about Garifuna's and no one stopped to correct them, not even myself. They said that Garifuna's were superstitious and stupid. I was in such disbelief that I did not know what to do. My family would have been saddened by the words emerging from the mouth of the boy they had taken in on his trips to Los Angeles. Then and there I realized that he did not know who I was, he knew nothing about me. The irony was that his remarks were almost identical to the ones made by my maternal grandmother twenty-six years ago. As I recount this incident, the tears are rolling down my cheeks.

The Garifuna were allowed to settle in the Stann Creek district, but the British isolated them from the rest of the country. The British allowed the Garifuna to enter Belize City with only a 48-hour pass, enough time for them to sell their harvest. Slave owners began rumors that the Garifuna "ate babies" and could "cast evil spells"; they spread these stories out of fear that their own slaves would run away and live with the Garifuna. (Bolland, 1988) These stories created a prejudice that to some extent still exist today. Belize City residents still view those in the South as a "semicivilized" culture. (Moberg, 1997, p.xxxiv) Like other nations with multiethnic groups, stereotypes continue to persist in Belize.

Related Literature

Anthropologists have focused more on the history, customs, familial ties, and beliefs (Foster, 1986, Gonzalez, 1969, 1987, 1988, Gullick, 1976, Kerns, 1983, Palacio, 1987, Sanford, 1971, Taylor, 1951, Young, 1971) of the Garifuna. There has been little work on education in Belize (Bennett, 1979, Shoman, 1994), and none on the current status of Garifuna youth's education. Most Garifuna youth's know their history, but they don't necessarily know where they are going.

Methodology

As a Belizean and a Garinagu, this paper cannot be "value-free"; as a researcher I cannot be neutral or distant. (Gluck and Patai, 1991) Moss (1996) states, "...no neutral framework exists against which we can evaluate competing theories—such frameworks are always historically and culturally situated (e.g. Baynes, Bohman, and McCarthy, 1991; Bernstein, 1985, 1992; Greene, 1994)" (p.27). I acknowledge my multiple identities in engaging in this research. Belize is my birthplace and the home of my family for generations. I do not claim that only I can tell this story or write this paper, however, I feel it is a voice that has not been heard. (Lather, 1986) It is the voice of Belizean-American who is Creole, Garinagu, and female.

The data for this paper was collected through observations, face-to-face interviews and secondary analysis. Using the constant comparative method (Glasser & Strauss, 1967) I analyzed the data, by referring back to the themes in the literature while organizing the themes found in the observations and interviews. First, observations were made during the summer of 1995, winter 1996-1997, and summer 1998. Second, literature was read on the Garifuna. Third, I asked present and past teachers in Dangriga, Garifuna teachers (who teach in other districts), and the youth about schooling and the changes they have seen. One limitation was my participant pool began with people I personally knew, or family members had a relationship with. Another limitation was the time factor, I think it would have been beneficial to spend anywhere from six months to a year to thoroughly go through the Archives of Belize and spend time in the classrooms. The interviews were usually done at the participant's home and were conducted so that both the participant and interviewer felt comfortable. The statements in the Result section

of the paper are followed by a pseudonym and a brief description of the person. The secondary sources used were government reports, newspapers, journals, and texts.

I had some concern about the government reports because they did not corroborate what the people in Dangriga were saying and what I was seeing. For example, the government reported that school enrollment for children between the ages of 5 and 16 years old in 1994 was ninety-eight percent. That number seemed high in comparison to what current teachers and retired teachers remember. They government also reported unemployment in 1996 at approximately thirteen point eight (13.8) percent. This number seemd not to correspond to my observations of people hanging out in the streets everyday, all day. Nevertheless, the government was the only supplier of data, even to my secondary sources.

Results

The Garifuna have long realized that education is essential and are staunch advocates of education. In schools across Belize, Garifuna men and women excel as teachers. Gonzalez (1987) and Kerns (1983) state that the Garifuna have long served in the teaching profession because of their ability to learn different languages and willingness to teach in remote areas. The Garifuna also have a history of entering the clergy, becoming government employees and training as nurses. (Taylor, 1951)

Like other schools in the British Empire, education was a missionary effort. (Bennett, 1979) The British were not interested in educating their Belizean subjects. Dangriga's schools were operated solely by the Roman Catholic Church, until the early 1970's. However, these schools represented a church-state institution in that the goals

were also reflective of the colony's goals. The goals were to maintain a society divided by occupation, race and class. The goals were to make sure that the people understood that the whites, the merchants and the landowners were in control. Schools in Dangriga, like elsewhere in the world, were transmitters of the social order. Students were taught the virtues of hard work, social order and obedience, the Protestant Ethic. (Bolland, 1988, p.159) Students learned about Britain and Europe, not about Belize and the Caribbean. The primary teaching method involved rote learning instead of critical thinking.

Education played a large role in bringing people on the margins into Belize society. As noted previously, the colonial government did not care about education for the masses. In 1930, only 3.3% of the country's budget went to education, in 1951, it was about 8%. In the 1970's about 17% of the budget was used for education. There has also been a significant increase in primary and secondary school. Higher education has been established and expanded. Although, there have been significant changes, there is still a long way to go. What the students are learning needs to be applicable to the world of work. (A history of Belize: Nation in the making, 1983, p.61)

Historically, access to secondary education and higher education in Belize was restricted, due mostly to finances. The Belize government realized these inequalities and began to offer scholarships. Presently, education is compulsory for all children ages five through fourteen. Education at this age is free of charge and principally through subsidized denominational schools under government control. In 1994, primary school enrollment was estimated at 97%, and secondary enrollment was at 36%. Education is estimated to be 20% of the total spending by the Central Government, one question is who is receiving the benefits. Even if you are successful in school, there are very few

options. Some of the choices are: attend an American university, University of the West Indies, University of Belize, St. John's College, Teachers Training College or the Belize College of Agriculture. The first two options cost more money than the average Belizean makes in a year. Therefore, your family has to be well-off financially or a scholarship is needed. The last four are also at an expense because the student would have to find a place to live and work in Belize City. These are not the only educational options, but they are among the most popular.

This paper suggests that there have been changes in the educational focus of the Garifuna youth of Dangriga and that these youth's attitude pervades the whole country. The participants saw the decline of interest in school as caused by 1. emigration of parents to the United States, 2. influences from American culture, and 3. Lack of employment opportunities.

Emigration of Parents

"The children's parents are not here and the grandparents are too old to keep up. The children enjoy school until about 13 and then they become inconsistent. Many of the young men drop out and many of the young ladies become pregnant." Sofia, a school teacher in Dangriga

"I enjoy school, but I know people who don't go. They live on their own and have to find a way to survive." Patrick, a student who will attend the Belize College of Agriculture in August

"These kids are lazy. They don't want to go to school; they don't want to farm or fish. And even if they do, they don't know how. They lack discipline." Mr. W., a retired teacher, principal and current shopkeeper

"Gal, I got two pickny. I neva finish school, unlike….My ma send me the things me and my sista need. Sometime granny help out." Faith, a young woman in her late teens

"I think about my niece and nephew, their mother left over thirty years ago and never returned. They had to sneak into the States and that is when they finally met her." Cecile, a Garifuna school teacher in the Cayo District

"I don't remember my parents." Sun (a nickname), a young man in his early twenties that does not have a steady job. He also has child on the way.

Emigration is not new to the Garifuna; they were forced to immigrate during slavery, forced to immigrate from St. Vincent and voluntarily immigrated from Roatan to the eastern shores of Central America. Palacio (1987) states, " They (the Garifuna) are in a state of more heightened flux than several others, having been long accustomed to living partly in their traditional setting of rural coastal villages as well as in urban communities in Central America and further away in North America" (p.2). Historically, men left the community to find wage paying jobs, but they always returned. Currently, men and women leave, with an increase in the proportion of women, but they do not return. (Gonzalez, 1987) Therefore children may be left behind for long periods of time because of the parent's lack of ability to send for them. Sometimes, these parents often work long and irregular hours and caring for child would not be advantageous.

The lure of coming to the United States is primarily economic. People believe that it is a place to earn money and to make life better for themselves and their family. Some see it as the solution to the lack of economic opportunity at home. The need to get to the United States is so great, that many have risked illegal immigration. As long as people feel that they can only become successful in America, they will continue to emigrate regardless of U.S. immigration policy.

During the late 1960's and 1970's, there was a mass exodus of parents to the United States, looking for a way to improve their standard of living. Many immigrant women entered the labor force legally and illegally working service jobs---like nannies, nurses aides, housekeepers, etc. Some are also nurses and teachers, but they have to get their licensing approved before they can take on their previous occupations. Currently, the licensing needed for many of these occupations requires these immigrants to return to school. These early immigrant parents sent "material things" to their children, but were not physically or emotionally there. (Note 3) The "material things" that were sent gave a false image of what the United States was like.

The emigration of parents can lead to generational conflict between the adolescents and their caretakers. The conflict can often lead to an adolescent leaving home or leaving school. The relationship is tenuous because this person is not the child's parent and the child may not see them as being capable of exerting any parental rights. Soto (1987) calls this relationship fostering or fosterage, where children are taken care of by a relative or non-relatives. (p.132) The adult doing the fostering usually receives monetary assistance, and an awareness of what is occurring outside of the community. Children then have two sets of parents, the biological and the foster. Although, most absent parents retain links to the community, others begin a new life in the United States.

American Influence

"The kids don't want tennis shoes, they want Air Jordan, Nike. Michael Jordan probably doesn't know where Belize is. These shoes cost $200.00 down here and up. Who can afford that? Some kids parents send them those things from the States." Orlando, a young man in his late twenties

"Hey, why don't you send me some Jordan's when you get back to the States!" Patrick

"I lived in Los Angeles for awhile, then I got in trouble. My parents thought it would be better for me here, but they have Crips and Bloods in Dangriga too". Dominique, a adolescent young man who lives with his grandmother

"Some of the children do not want to speak Garifuna, they don't even want to speak Creole. They prefer to speak American slang." Mr. W.

" I am a little worried. My daughter.....wants to wear her hair a certain way. She wants to wear what she sees on TV. I have to remind her that we are in Belize and not in New York." Ms. F. , a former teacher in Dangriga and the mother of a pre-teen

"I can't wait to go to the States, so I can shop. They don't have anything I want down here." Lisa, a adolescent who has family in the United States

The American interest in the Caribbean and Central America began with business investments. The U.S. government wanted to protect these businesses economic interest in the region because they were profitable. The U.S. government also wanted to expand their "values" to this region of the Americas. After winning the Spanish-American War, the U.S. acquired several Caribbean territories and became a world power. For example, the U.S. assisted Panama in it's fight for independence from Columbia, which led to the building of the Panama Canal. This type of interest continued with the involvement of the U.S. military aiding various rebels and dictators from Cuba to Panama to Nicaragua to El Salvador. Because the British were already in Belize, the U.S. respected their presence. However, Belize was close enough to the U.S. that it's influence could be felt. The U.S. also played a crucial role in Guatemala's continued claim to Belize and Belize's fight for independence.

The American influence on Belize is not new, even the British government realized this in the mid-1930's. The British Governor of Belize, Sir Alan Burns wrote

> The whole colony is, however, largely influenced by the comparative proximity of the U.S. and the people as a whole are more American than British in their outlook. This may be due to a limited extent to the

> cinema, but is more directly attributable to the influence of trade and education. (A History of Belize, p. 64)

The American influence is perpetuated by: tourists, cable television, friends and relatives who have visited the United States and gifts parents send. When friends and relatives return from the United States, they introduce new elements into the community, for example, clothes, hairstyles, household furnishings, and American slang. The influence of American music, specifically some aspects of rap and its glorification of drug selling and violence, has also made school less appealing. When you walk down Albert Street, the main shopping strip in Belize City, the stores are selling the same things you would see at a typical American mall. When you turn on the radio, you hear the same music as those in Los Angeles, New York, and Atlanta. The 1980's seemed to mark the turning point, with a heightened influence through illegal American television access and the importation of VCR's and movies available on video. It seemed to take until the early 1990's for television to make a big impact in Dangriga, but once it got there, it took a hold of even the poorest households.

There is this misconception among the youth that those in America have money. The tourist who visit Belize may spend a lot of money, but many adolescents do not realize that most tourist budget and save for these two-week vacations. They also notice that the tourist are treated better than they are and can afford to go to places in their country that they cannot. Bolland (1988), an expert on Belizean history, would disagree with the impact of emigration, but would agree with the influence of the United States. He states, "The basic problems are caused by the nature of the country's economy, which is open, dependent, and largely foreign controlled, and by the increasingly pervasive influence of the United States" (p. 202) The American influence is economical and

cultural. Economical through tourism, the dependence on foreign aid and the money sent back from emigrants. Culturally through: tourism, emigrants, television and music. The cultural was also influenced through the schools, which were established by missionaries from the United States.

Sir Alan Burns sentiments are still relevant in Belize. It is not surprising that the influence of the U.S. existed in Belize; most of the missionaries who established the schools were from the America. The missionaries educated more than half the population of Belize. Maybe it is because America shows itself as a country filled with multiple ethnic groups who share some common belief. Whether or not Belizeans consciously or unconsciously try to imitate that is questionable. It could also be the proximity that continues to interest the youth. Getting to America has always been an easier feat than getting to Great Britain. Even the British and other Europeans wanted to immigrate there, it would appear that the whole world wants to at least visit the United States. Maybe it is the image portrayed as "the land of opportunity", that somehow persists even in times of economic despair. Whatever the lure, there is a hope that is tied to getting to America that is like no other hope that the youth have.

Lack of Employment Opportunities

"It is hard if you do not have a steady job. We don't grow most of our food anymore; you need a job to eat. A lot of people hustle the tourist, but that's not reliable." Sun

"I used to work for a white man from the States. He left and I am now selling oranges from my farm." Fernando, a young man in his early twenties

"I was worried when my son finished high school. He was not really into school and their weren't that many jobs available. He did not work for a long time. Finally he went to trade school in Belize City." Cecile

"We are teaching more about our country and region. But we must help these children become useful members of society." Sofia

"I don't think I will return to Belize. I plan to finish my term working for the government (in exchange for a scholarship) and go to law school in England. I want to study international law. I like Europe and would have no problem settling here. " Getty, a graduate of the University of West Indies, who is a diplomat

"I don't want to farm out here. I want to work and live in Belize City. Nothing happens here. The only jobs are at the hotel or orange groves. Even if you work in the groves it is only seasonal and they don't pay enough for the work we do." Yolanda, a young woman in her early twenties

There has been a pattern of underdevelopment in Belize, due to it's status as a colony. Like other colonies Belize was controlled by Britain, which controlled the nations capital, land and labor, among other things. Belize did not produce logwood and mahogany for itself, these products were for the European market. Because the economy relied heavily on mahogony export, there was little else to do but become a mahogany worker. There were few jobs outside of that industry, and the whites and light-skinned elite, British and native, held the better paying jobs for themselves. Therefore Belize became dependent on Britain and the U.S. for products they needed. In 1949, over 70% of Belize's imports came from the U.S.. By 1981, over 35.4% of the imports came from the U.S. and 60.8% of the exports went to the U.S. These factors continue to influence the economic growth or lack of growth of Belize's economy.

Historically, Garifuna men and women planted surplus crops they could sell. However, they were limited to subsistence farming in the 18th and 19th centuries because they were denied the right to own land. They were discouraged to expand their agricultural enterprises because the British wanted them to cut mahogany. Wage labor in the lumber and sugar plantations attracted men, and they traveled to other areas to work. Women then became the mainstay of the community, and continued to work on the farm,

or bake, or sew, as ways to supplement the families' income and to survive while the men were away. However, most women are not planting crops anymore, they are only wage laborers. Therefore, if they are not able to get a job it is very difficult to survive.

Currently, there are very few jobs in Belize, regardless of what the government statistics say. The tourism industry is on the rise and jobs are available in that sector. The civil service jobs are few, because those who have them seldom leave them until retirement. There also exists appointed jobs in the governmental system, but if a party is voted out of office, your job is gone. There are American companies like Dickies clothing, but people are not leaving those jobs. In 1997, manufacturing employed 11.3 % of the working population. There are also citrus industry related occupations, but many youth do not want to do that, and it is seasonal. Also the politics of Belize, which some say is corrupt, does not provide opportunities for all; as noted there has long been an antagonistic relationship between the Belize government and the Garifuna. But, the Garifuna are not the only people unable to find work.

All these factors that influence the Garifuna youths views of education connect to one another. Belize has an economic system that it does not control. The economic system necessitates people to leave and look for work outside the community. The combination of parents leaving and the influx of American products and ideology, leaves the adolescent in a state of confusion. Palacio (1987) states, "The collective impact of the exodus is self-fulfilling prophecy that one must leave the village to become successful" (p.4). Instead of making sure opportunities are available for all youth within the country, for some it seems that the opportunities only exist in the United States. There is still a

belief that education is important within the Garifuna community, and those that excel are held up on a pedestal. However, there is a growing population of youth who do not see the importance of education, especially if there is nothing to do with it. Regardless of the country, not all children succeed in school and there needs to be an avenue for them to find success.

Implications for Further Research

Much anthropological work has been done on the Garifuna; more so on the Garifuna in Honduras (Gonzalez, 1969, 1988). Ten years ago, Gonzalez in Sojourners of the Caribbean: Ethnogenesis and ethnohistory of the Garifuna (1988) noted that Garifuna children in Guatemala and Honduras had a high dropout rate when compared ot other ethnic groups in their area. (p.161) However, the Garifuna in Dangriga need to be involved in an action research project that would look at their educational system and see if it is meeting the needs of their youth. This project would work with the community to improve the job opportunities of the youth in Belize and if they would like to migrate to the U.S.; they would have the skills to succeed there. Some may say it is better to be poor in Belize, than America, but poor is poor no matter where you live. The Garifuna language, the religious beliefs, the kinship relationships are worthy of study and longitudinal research, but so is the education of the Garifuna.

Twenty years ago, Bennett (1979) discussed the need to reevaluate the educational system, and his work needs to be revisited. Bennett (1979) states, "It (the decolonization process) must enable us to develop our own national philosophy of education and give us confidence that working together we can equip our youth to play

constructive roles in Belizean development" (p.23). Those sentiments are still relevant today, because the Garifuna youth are not fully able to participate in Belize's social and economic development.

Conclusion

The history of the Garifuna in Belize is intricately tied to the way they are currently treated, economically, socially, politically and as a result educationally. There was a time when education was seen as the route to success. People were leaning away from an agricultural and fishing subsistence, and occupations like nursing and teaching were on the rise. Education does not seem as important anymore, only money and "material things".

The youth have become caught up in the materials of success, instead of how to get there. Emigration should not be viewed as the only road to economic stability and success. When Garifuna people initially immigrated to the U.S., Britain, or Canada, it offered a sense of security to their family in Belize. However, it is not enough, it sends a false message of what should be valued. There was a time when an immigrant could come to America with only a minimum education and be successful, times have changed, but many youths do not realize that. American is not the Promised Land and even native-born blacks have difficulties finding employment with a minimal education. Television and the media show that there are easier ways to attain success, more dangerous, but more exciting than school.

Belize's demographics continue to rapidly change. Over the last fifteen years Guatemalan, Honduran and Salvadoran refugee and immigrant numbers have increased.

Moberg (1987) states, "Immigration emerged as the most critical issue facing Belize by the late 1980's, when the country's population claimed the highest proportion of foreign- to native-born residents in the hemisphere" (p. xxix). Drug abuse, specifically the use of crack cocaine has immerged and HIV infection has increased. Poverty and marginalization are rampant. For Belize to truly be independent it has to take control of its country without excessive cultural, political and economic influences from other countries, especially the United States.

I was born in Belize City on a Thursday afternoon. My mother was a nurse and my father was studying history at the University of the West Indies. I grew up in home were education was stressed and independence was nurtured. I grew up knowing my heritage Garifuna and Creole, but not as much as if I had grown up in Dangriga. A tinge of jealousy always overwhelmed me when I heard the children my age speaking Garifuna. I wanted that too, and now they want what I am ***perceive****d to have; the American Dream.*

NOTES

1. Clarifying terms is necessary for the discussion taking place.
   Black Caribs – A name given by the Europeans to the Garifuna because of their mixed cultural and biological heritage. (Wilk & Chapin, 1990, p.40)

   Garifuna – a. An ethnic label.
   b. The name of the language the Garinagu speak, which has been described as predominantly Arawak (Indian) with additional words from Carib, Spanish, French, and English. Some have stated that it is predominantly Carib. However, the Garifuna developed their own language with very few African words, but a culturally maintained many African traditions.

   Garinagu – The Garifuna's name for themselves

2. My working definition of youth is a person between the ages of 15 and 25 years old.

3. "Material things" may be: books, TV's, VCR's, clothes, tennis shoes (i.e. Air Jordan, Nikes, Adidas), hair products, etc.

REFERENCES

Bennett, J.A. (1979). Goals, Priorities and the Decolonization of Education in Belize. Belizean Studies 7 (5) p. 18 – 23.

Bolland, O.N. (1988). Colonialism and resistance in Belize: Essays in historical sociology. Belize City, Belize: Cubola Productions.

Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.) (1994). Handbook of qualitative research. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Foster, B. (1986). Heart drum: Spirit possession in the Garifuna communities of Belize. Belize City, Belize: Cubola Productions.

Glasser, B. & Strauss, A.L. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research. Chicago: Aldine.

Gluck, S.B. & Patai, D. (1991). Women's words: The feminist practice of oral history. New York: Routledge.

Gmelch, G. (1992). Double passage: The lives of Caribbean migrants abroad and back home. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Gonzalez, N. (1969). Black Carib Household Structure. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

_____(1987). Garifuna settlement in New York: A new frontier. Constance R. Sutton & Elsa M. Chaney (Eds.) Caribbean life in New York City: Sociocultural dimensions. New York: Center for Migration Studies.

_____(1988). Sojourners of the Caribbean: Ethnogenesis and ethnohistory of the Garifuna. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press

Government of Belize (1991). 1991 Population Census: Major Findings. Belmopan, Belize: Central Statistical Office. Csogob@btl. net

Grant, C. (1976). The Making of Modern Belize: Politics, Society, and British Colonialism in Central America. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gullick, C.J.M.R. (1976). Exiled From St. Vincent: The Development of Black Carib Culture in Central America up to 1945. Malta: Progress Press.

A history of Belize: Nation in the making. (1983). Belize City, Belize: Sunshine Books Ltd.

Kasinitz, P. (1992). Caribbean New York: Black immigrants and the politics of race. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Kerns, V. (1983). Women and the ancestors: Black Carib kinship and ritual. Urbana, IL: Univeristy of Illinois Press.

Krohn, L.H. (1987). Readings in Belizean History. 2nd ed. Belize City, Belize: Belizean Studies, St. John's College.

Lather, P. (1986). Research as praxis. Harvard Educational Review, 56 (3), p. 257 – 277.

Levine, B.B. (1987). The caribbean exodus. New York: Praeger.

Moberg, M. (1997). Myths of ethnicity and nation: Immigration, work, and identity in the Belize Banana Industry. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press.

Moss, P.A. (1996). Enlarging the dialogue in education measurement: Voices from interpretive research traditions Educational Researcher, 25 (1), p. 20 - 28.

Palacio, J. (1987). Age as a source of differentiation within a Garifuna village in Southern Belize. Belize ethnicity and development. Papers presented at the first annual studies on Belize conference, May 25 – 26, 1987. Belize City, Belize: SPEAR (Society for the Promotion of Education and Research).

Sanford, M. (1971). Disruption of the mother and child relationship in conjunction with matrifocality: A study of childkeeping among the Carib and Creole of British Honduras. Ph.D. dissertation, Catholic University of America.

Shoman, A. (1994). Thirteen chapters in the history of Belize. Belize City, Belize: Angelus Press.

Soto, I.M. (1987). West Indian child fostering: Its role in migrant exchanges. Constance R. Sutton & Elsa M. Chaney (Eds.) Caribbean life in New York City: Sociocultural dimensions. New York: Center for Migration Studies.

South America, Central America and the Caribbean 1999 (7th ed.). (1999) London: Europa Publications.

Sutherland, A. (1998). The making of Belize: Globalization in the margins. Wesport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

Taylor, D.M. (1951). The Black Carib of British Honduras. Viking Fund Publication No. 17. New York: Wenner-Gren.

Wilk, R. & Chapin, M. (1990). Ethnic minorities in Belize: Mopan Kekchi and Garifuna. Belize City, Belize: SPEAR (Society for the Promotion of Education and Research).

Young, W. (1971). An account of the Black Charaibs in the island of St. Vincents. First published in 1795. London: Frank Cass.

END

U.S. Dept. of Education

Office of Educational
Research and Improvement (OERI)

ERIC

Date Filmed
May 23, 2001